

Papa by [flashforeward](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Hurt/Comfort, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, M/M, Near Future, Past Child Abuse

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Characters: Billy Hargrove, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

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Summary:

Billy misunderstands some things about Eleven's past.

Papa

Author's Note:

Inspired by [This ask](#) that Flippyspoon got on tumblr.
I couldn't resist.

The phone ringing wakes him. He rolls onto his side and stares blearily at the clock beside his bed. It's almost one in the morning. Who the hell is calling? He hears his dad - grunting and grumbling - answer the phone and he lets his eyes fall back closed. It isn't going to have anything to do with him.

There's a sharp knock at the door. "Steve," his father's voice, quiet but stern. "Steve, Jim Hopper's on the phone for you."

He's awake now.

"Thanks, dad," he calls, sitting up. He rubs at his eyes and grabs the phone from his bedside table - his parents had installed another line when he'd started babysitting regularly. "Chief Hopper?" he asks. "Is something wrong?" Does he need to go watch Eleven while Hopper deals with something?

"Can you collect your boyfriend?"

What? "Excuse me?"

"Your boyfriend. Hargrove? He's over here and he's drunk and he says he's gonna kick my ass for putting my hands on El."

What? "I don't. What?"

"Just get over here."

There's a click and the line goes dead and Steve just stares at the receiver for a few seconds before throwing off his blankets and grabbing shoes and pants and heading out the door. Doesn't even pause to see if his parents are still awake, doesn't leave a note to let them know where he is. He'll take whatever punishment comes for it in the morning, he's got to figure out what the hell is going on.

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"What happened to El?" Billy asked. Steve was watching El, Mike, and Will and he'd taken them to the pool because it was hot. Billy had tagged along, bringing Max. He and Steve sat in deck chairs, watching the kids splash each other.

Steve glanced from Billy to El and back, head cocked in confusion. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"Her..." he gestured to his torso and arms.

Oh.

Steve shrugged. "No clue, man. Not my business."

"Oh. Okay."

Silence fell, awkward. Billy just sat, watching Max teaching El secrets to winning chicken fights.

After, Steve was trying to corral Mike and Will and he saw Billy approach El. Max was wringing her hair out over Billy's backpack, but while Billy could probably see her out of the corner of his eye, he didn't seem to care. Just knelt down beside El to talk to her.

The hell is that about? Steve wondered. But Will shoved Mike back into the pool, distracting him. "If you keep it up, we're not stopping for ice cream!"

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"Good," Hopper says from the doorway when Steve gets out of the car. He disappears back into the house and Steve jogs to get through the door before it closes. Billy's on the couch, hands pressed to his eyes. Hopper gestures to him when Steve comes in. "Collect your boyfriend."

"What *happened?*" Steve asks.

"El told me," Billy says, slurred.

"Told you?"

Billy looks up. "The scars," he says, his voice so quiet it's almost inaudible. "I asked and she said—" his voice catches and he looks down again.

Steve still isn't sure what's going on, but Hopper seems to have figured it out. He sits on the couch and lays a hand on Billy's shoulder. "Why didn't you say that before?" he asks. Billy just shakes his head and Hopper squeezes his shoulder. "She said it was papa, didn't she?"

"Yes."

"Son, I'm not *papa*," Hopper explains. "Papa was." He shakes his head. "It isn't really my place to tell everything, but I'm *not* papa."

"Papa's gone." A small voice from the hallway and El appears, slowly walks over to sit at Hopper's side. "Papa's gone," she repeats, setting a hand on Billy's arm.

Billy sucks in a breath, lets it out slow and shaky. "Sorry," he mumbles.

"It's all right. You okay to go home, or would you like to crash on the couch?"

"I'll—"

"He can stay at my place, Chief," Steve says. He still isn't really sure what all happened tonight, but he can tell Billy doesn't need to be alone right now.

"That all right?" Hopper asks. Billy nods and Hopper gives him a hand up. Steve wraps an arm around his waist and together they walk out to Steve's car. The drive back to Steve's is quiet and he thinks Billy's fallen asleep but when they get there, Billy slips his hand into Steve's and squeezes it - a silent thank you.

They fall asleep together on Steve's bed, fully clothed, Billy wrapped in Steve's embrace.